The Three Merry

# WIVES

OF

# Green-Goose Fair.

With them for Mirth None can Compare.

OR,

A Pleasant discourse of three Merry-Cummers.

*Being full of delight and pleasant wit,*
*The merriest Book that ever was writ.*

Printed in the Year, 1694

# The Preface.

IN the dayes of old, when men were little boyes,
And pretty Maids delighted in fine toyes;
About that time, in the dayes of yore,
I pen'd this story never pen'd before.
Fetcht from the Satchell of Antiquitie,
Blame me not if I chance to tell a lie;
For 'tis so old, that I thas pen'd the same,
Can hardly tell from whence the story came.
Some say in the bottom of the sea 'twas found,
A fortnight since my Gransires Mare was drown'd:
Some say it was in the belly of a fish,
Found on a fasting day, in a Friers dish.
And in the sweet bag of a Humble Bee,
And so my Authors cannot well agree;
But 'tis not so, for in a cup of Wine,
I found it scattered by the Muses nine.
And after cast into Parnassus Well,
But how it was hooks up, I cannot tell:
Nevertheless there's many a silly else,
Doe think that I invented this my self.
Well, let them think their pleasure, I'le proceed,
But have a care and laugh not when you read;
For fear you strain your eyes, and they run o're,
So being blind you never read it more,

# The three merry Wives of Green-Goose Fair.

I Know not when, but three blyth wives there
That took their journey into Green-Goose fair,
One had unto her husband a Shoomaker,
She lov'd the Brewer better then the Baker.
Another had a Corn-cutter, O strange!
An active fellow known at the Exchange:
A Carvers Wife the other woman was,
A verie merrie, lustie, bonnie lass.
These three to Green-Goose fair, did take their way
Onlie to be merrie as some say:
Walking along they found a Diamond Ring,
Pleasure with profit is a gallant thing.
All saw it at one time, but she that did,
Take the Ring up, did seem for to forbid;
The other two to claim their shares in it,
Covetousness had taught her so much wit.
The other two had vow'd to have their shares
In this same Ring, or fall about her ears;
When she saw them so hot, she told them this,
To have the Ring divided 'twas amiss
Quoth she, before the Ring shall be divided,
I had rather yeild the cause shall be decided;
By the next man they meet, they were content,
So onward of their journey then they went.
The next man that they met, was a chaste Friar,

Onelie he burn'd a little in desire,
In fiery zeal towards a holy Sister,
And whensoever he met he kindlie kist her.
Creept from the Cloister having his Devotion,
All that he now did seek was for Promotion;
He sought to be admired willingly,
A grave Confession of a Nunnerie.
But O! it could not be and what of that?
He went without a morsell for his Cat:
But since he this his Opportunity,
He walks abroad to fish for other fry,
Meeting with these three women by the way,
He was the first did act the Comick Play;
Well met faire woman, quoth the Fryer then,
Good morrow, quoth the women, honest man,
O how the women wronged him, he for shame,
To call him honest man was not his name;
He thought they jeared him, and began to smile,
Yet he was very patient all that while.
Good master Fryer, quoth the Carvers wife,
Do justice now, and save a womans life;
You must be Umpire sit in this our cause,
O seek to save me from those Tygers clawes.
I found a Diamond Ring, and these two Sluts,
Have sworn, and vow'd that the'l rip up my guts;
Unlesse they have shares in this same Ring,
Now I have told my tale, judge of the thing.
The friers understanding of the matter,
Did cheat the one, and with the other flatter;
But yet he found that he small good could do,
For he in pleasing one displeased two.
He to the Carvers wife bore some good will,
The Ring she had, he bad her keep it still;
'Twas musick in her eares, but presently,

It prov'd a discord in the Harmony.
The other women stamp, curse and swears,
As loud as thunder in the Friers ears;
And calls him bald-pate, fillie Cockcomb vain,
That was so partiall in a cause so plain.
The Frier half afraid, but would not shew,
His fear to them for fear that they should grow
More cholerick, but speakes them brave fair,
As being loath to lose such dainty ware:
Blaming himself that was so bold and dull,
As not to satisfie them to the full.
Withall he kindly promis'd that rude rout,
That he would bring the business so about.
To tell them, and it should be plain exprest,
Which of them did deserve the Ring the best:
They were content, why then quoth he it is so,
That I must lie with every one of you
At severall times, appoint the time and place,
And I will finish them all in little space.
The woman then that puts me in most fear,
Doth best deserve the Ring away to bear.
And be not doubtfull what will follow after,
With that they all burst forth into a laughter.
Nevertheless they being covetous,
Were all contented that it should be thus.
Whispering together then a little space,
Shall we, quoth they, yeeld for to be so base:
Well if we do it with this bald-pate Sir,
We'l keep our honestie and punish him.
Women look to the thing ye have in hand,
The bargan is made, the Frier will make it stand:
A Frier is a dangerous knave at put,
Then have a care and keep the wicked shut.
O you have need be wise and look about you,

For you have lust within, and knaves without you;
But now there rose a new combustion great,
The Frier he had us'd a strong deceit
To wheel them in, and greatly they complain'd,
Musing how they should keep themselves unstain'd;
But yet the Ring although of value small,
Makes them adventure honestie and all.
Ere they would lose it they would lose their lives,
So they must needs go whom the Devil drives:
But there they held a counsell in the field,
Yet never a woman was there that would yeeld
To be the first should lye with Frier Sim.
Until at length they took advice of him;
For to draw lots, this counsel pleas'd them all,
On the Shoe-makers Wife the lot did fall
She blushing like the Damask Rose in June,
Sayes Frier if it must be, come thou soon:
But yet not so, the morning is the best,
Ile pause upon it when I take my rest.
My husband he goes forth to morrow morn,
But 'tis not thou shall make him wear the horn;
When he is gone, then at the window knock,
Ile open doot though I be in my smock.
And let thee in, and kick thee out again,
After that thou hast laboured long in vain:
And put thee in such fear, that thou would'st give
A Kingdom if thou hadst it, but to live.
Remember then thy words think on this things
He that doth fear thee most shall have the Rings
Spare me not woman, quoth the Frier then,
They that do fear a woman are no men
And so they part and take their leave of Sim
Ploting new projects how to punish him:
The Carvers wife, a subtile Wench was she,

Said

Said Gossips if you will be rul'd by me.
We'l put the Frier into such grievous fights
He'd better be with Goblins, Hags and Sprights;
We'l hide somethings our husbands bear about,
Some tooles we know they cannot be without.
And we shall then be sure that they'l come back,
When they are forth to fetch them tools they lack:
And then the Frier when he is in Bed,
Will think no less, but he should lose his head;
But this be sure to hide the Rogue away,
Lest we and our husbands have a fray:
In the mean time, our husbands being there,
She that shall put the Frier in most fear
By any consent shall beat away the Ring,
The other two were pleased with this thing:
And after they at Green-Goose Fair had been
Their hearts being set upon a merrie pin.
They friendlie part, your patience let me borrow,
And you shall know what hapned on the morrow.

## *How the Frier went to the Shoe-makers Wife, and what hapened.*

That night the lustie Frier could not sleep,
But early in the morning up did creep;
And did as he was counselled before,
Stand opposite against the womans door.
Waiting when her husband forth did goe,
Which was not long if you the truth would know:
No sooner he was gone, but brazen face,
More bold then welcome, 'gins to knock apace.
The woman opens when she heard him knock,
Leaps from her bed and meets him in her smock:
To bed they went, the Frier began to play,

As thinking he was sure of his prey.
Now Frier, quoth the woman, what's your will,
But as you love your life sir lie you still,
Stir not a hand, nor yet a finger move,
But let us first discourse a while of love.
Frier you can resolve me I do know,
Whether the thing be lawfull yea or no?
Then he begins to tell her stories rare;
And seems to build Castles in the Air.
Frier quoth she, pray let your hands lie still,
I am forbidden fruit, talke what you will;
As weak a Scholler as I am, I know,
The heaven is high, the place you seek is low.
And so she held him still in talke until
Her husband came to keep the Frier from hell:
For she it seems her husbands tools had hid,
To cause him to come home all this she did.
Frier quoth she, my husband knocks, he's come,
Now for the Ring, Frier beware you hum;
O whither shall I run the Frier cryes?
He looking round about, a Chest he spies,
In which he creeps, and she imprisons him,
And keeps the keyes to keep in Frier *Sim*:
Then for her husband openeth the door,
The Frier was never in such a case before.
To bed the woman goes, husband quoth she,
What come you home for, for my tools quoth he?
Quoth she, they ly underneath the bed,
Since you went forth I have been almost dead,
O husband verie sick, I pray you give me
A little *Aquavitæ*, to relieve me:
The bottle is in the Chest, O it is there,
The Frier he began to stink for fear,
Where are the keyes wife? quoth the loving man,

Quoth

Quoth she alas I know not by Saint *Ann*;
But if you were as sick as I, I swear,
I could not have the patience to forbear.
But break the Chest, and not for keyes so look,
With that the man a bar of iron took:
Laid on the Chest as if he had been mad,
Which made the woman smile, the Frier sad.
The poor distressed Frier that sillie elfe,
For verie fear did so bepisse himself;
That it run through the Chest about the flour,
All o're the room even to the verie door.
O hold your hands, quoth the woman then,
I think you are the unhappiest of all men:
For I protest and swear by *Aristotle*,
That you have broke my *Aquavitæ* bottle.
Husband be gone, and be not you perplext,
I love you nere the worse, though I am vext;
With that he gave her kindlie kisses two,
Took up his tools and bid his wife adue,
But O how glade was *Sim*, when as he heard,
The Shoemaker was gone, whom he so feard:
Then with a hollow fainting voice he spoke,
Mistris, I say your bottle is not broke.
But overcharg'd with liquor, lack of air,
And forced forth by thundring claps and fear;
Open your Chest and take your bottle out,
Behold the *Aquavitæ* runs about.
If there be anie Purgatorie sure,
This is the place where torments I endure:
God and Saint *Francis* help me, for I am spent,
I have endured sufficient punishment,
The woman heard him make such pitteous moan,
She let him out and wisht him to be gone;
And Frier do not you forget this thing,

She

She that doth fear you most, must have the Ring:
The Frier discontented went away.
And to the Corn-cutters wife he went next day.

## How the Frier went to the Corn-cutters Wife, and what happened.

ONe storm is past, & though the ſk be clear,
Another tempeſt follows verie nyar!
The burned child they ſay doth dreed the fire
But ſo much wit had not the ſenceleſs Frier.
For he to get between a womans armes,
Would adventure through a thouſand harmes;
Go's to the Corn-cutters wife, & there he ſtands
Againſt the door rubbing of his hands;
The man goes forth which makes the Frier glade,
He knocks at door as if he had been mad:
The woman ſhe was loath her ſelf to venter,
At length ſhe opens and the Frier doth enter.
Me thinks quoth ſhe I ſhould not goe to bed,
But with the man that had my maiden-head;
Sweet Miſtris quoth the Frier yeeld conſent,
Change of delights breeds women moſt content,
The woman went to bed with him, but yet
She had more grace then the Frier had wit:
For ſhe like to a kind and loyall wife,
Before the Friers face did draw her knife.
And laid it in the bed between them two,
As ſign that to her husband ſhe was true;
And ever and anon this was her note,
Frier lie ſtill or elſe I will cut thy throat.
O Miſtris, quoth the Frier, by my cool,
Venter thy bodie, I'le venter my ſoul:
'Tis but a venizll crime loves fruit to ſteal,
Keep your own counſell, I will ne're reveal.

The

The lustfull Frier no longer could forbear,
Begins to sit, the woman begins to sweat;
And quicklie she had gotten up her knife,
Her Husband came to save the Friers life.
Hark Frier quoth the woman my husband knocks,
Fit punishment for such dunghill cocks:
Alas quoth the Frier what shall betide me,
Good Mistris use your skill now for to hide me.
She with the bed-cloaths covered Frier *Sim*,
Then runs to her husband lets him in;
The Corn-cutter told his loving Wife,
That he came home for his Corn cutting knife,
The woman told her husband she knew that,
But the poor Frier that lack'd a bit for's cat:
Durst not stir hand nor foot, nor hardlie breath,
But to Saint *Francis* did his life bequeath.
His throbing heart with fear was almost broken,
His life he would have given for a token;
Husband quoth she, I'le go to bed again,
I am not verie well, I tell thee plain.
To bed she goes to hide the Friers disgrace,
And with the blanket covereth his face:
Wife quoth the man, farewell I cannot stay,
Husband quoth she, before you go away.
Pray will you cut my corn it pains me so,
That I can verie hardlie stand or go;
I heard you say a moneth ago, sweet wife,
You never had a corn in all your life.
A corn quoth she, may grow within a Sennet,
And a mans horn quoth he, within a minute;
He that shall seek indeed to wrong you so,
Shall dearlie pay for it before he go.
What shall become of me then, quoth the Frier,
This spark I fear will turn into a fire;

Now

Now one thing must be understood by all,
The Frier being in bed lay next the wall.
Wife quoth the man, lets see your corn, come Peg,
With that she took the Frier by the leg,
And pulld it o're her, like a craftie Slut,
Husband, quoth she, here is a corn to cut:
She wiselie handled the matter so,
That he saw nothing but the Friers toe,
Thinking it was his wifes that craftie elfe,
Now for the Ring, Frier beware of thy self:
Wife, quoth the man, here is no corn, here's none,
Husband, quoth she it lyeth near the bone;
Cut deeper man, what do you mean, cut nigher,
Suppose ye were a gelding of a Frier,
Should goe about to make you wear the horn,
As you would deal with him deal with his corn:
I feel it not, cut deeper good *John Goff*,
I care not though you cut this toe quite off;
Although it bleed and it be very sore,
Cut off the toe, the corn will come no more;
With that the Frier pincht her by the breech,
O husband hold your hand I you beseech.
For now I feel it, 'tis cut near the bone,
It is sufficient let it now alone:
The man perceiving it vvas cut so deep,
Thinking no less but that tvvas her did vveep.
And vvent about to salve the sore, but she,
Said husband no too pittifull you be,
Pox take it, and with that gave it a cuff,
I tell thee husband it is not deep enough;
The sillie man amazed then did grow,
To see her so hard hearted to her toe,
As he supposed, nothing he suspected
But in spite of love, I greatlie fear,

If he had known the Frier had been ſo near,
His counting houſe, he ſurelie would have thought
For all his love to her ſhe had been naught:
And therefore ſhe did wiſelie for to hide him,
Though otherwiſe her heart could not abide him;
His leave then of his wife the man did take,
Which made *Sims* heart glade, which before did ake.
Frier quoth the woman, riſe and make report,
How well you like my honeſt new found ſport;
Fox take you and your ſport, the Frier ſaid,
I ne're in all my life was ſo afraid;
I am ſo lame that I can hardlie goe,
Sure I ſhall loſe the uſe of my great toe:
Frier quoth the woman 'tis the leaſt of harmes,
To loſe a toe between a vvomans armes.
The Carvers vvife ſee ye do not abuſe,
Leſt you a better joint then this do loſe.

## *How the Frier went to the Carvers wife, and what happened.*

THe Frier being vvviſe repulſe before, (ote
Came off vvith ſhame, but vvould not yet give
Nor could the preſent loſs of his great toe,
Daunt him ſo much but that he needs muſt go,
Unto the Carvers vvife: vvell ſo it vvas,
He the third time muſt prove himſelf an aſs:
His preſent danger could not make him rue,
But ſince the Carver vvas abroad he knevv.
He boldlie entered the houſe vvith ſhame,
And thus ſalutes the honeſt minded Dame;
Miſtris, quoth he, I did preſume to knock,
As hoping for to find you in your ſmock.
As now I have my hopes accompliſhed,
The ſooner I ſhall find you in your bed;

And

And being there a little time well spent,
I doubt not but to give you good content:
And go as willingly with me to bed,
As when you went to lose your maiden-head.
And stand not on delays, for why tis thus,
Delayes you know prove oft times dangerous;
You are the last that now must use your skill,
To win the ring after we have our fill.
Of sweet delights, he her so much did charme,
She gave him leave to take her by the arm;
And lift her to her bed, when he was laid,
He creept to bed to her, and thus he said;
You are the Carvers wife, come be not coy,
But give me leave to Carve you out a boy.
What though your husband be a workman good,
Those Creatures which he carves in stone and wood
Are mooveless, senseless, thus much let me tell ye,
That I can carve a Creature on your belly.
That shall outstrip them all. O do not scoffe me,
But be you pleas'd to make some sport of me.
At length she gave the Frier a box on th'ear,
For creeping to her as it seems too near.
He grunts, she gives him then another cuff.
And in my mind she serv'd him well enough.
The chollerick Frier knew not what to say,
At last the Carver came to part the fray:
The Carver knocks the woman begins to start,
The Frier he was vexed to the heart;
Skips out of bed, and all about did run,
Where shall I hide my self, I am undone.
My husband knocks, Frier bestir you stumps,
Make haste I say, for he will make clubs trumps.
Where shall I bide me quoth the Frier then,
I think I am the unhappiest of all men.

No

Now Frier quoth the woman if you be wise,
And would be safe, then follow my advice;
Next room is full of Images most rare,
Of naked men and women gait compare;
That you would almost swear they living were,
Strip you stark naked then and stand you there:
In middle of these Images there stand,
But do not stir a foot nor yet a hand:
Now Frier as the last you will agree,
To bestid the ring to none but unto me:
And so she left him standing full of woe,
Just like an Image made of barley dough:
And lets her husband in, when in the entry,
He did begin to question with his Dame,
Who had been there since, unto whom she said,
A Gentleman to have an Image made.
And I, quoth she, have made it very neat,
And though I say it, lively and complete;
With that the Carver he began to smile,
Thinking that she had jested all the while,
Nay do not laugh, quoth she, for here it is,
Look on it now, and tell me where's amiss:
With that into the room she guided him,
Shewed him the Image of Frier Sim.
Who stood among the Images as still,
As anie of the rest against his will;
Zounse, quoth the man, this is no Image Wife,
If ever I saw a man in all my life.
This is a living man, a Frier I think,
With that the Frier he began to stink:
The Carver went to take him by the hand,
The Frier so demurelie then did stand.
Thinking now surelie he should go to wrack,
Had not the woman pul'd her husband back;

I pray you forbear quoth she, for by this light
It is new painted and you'l spoil it quite.
Hardlie could she perswade this man alas,
To believe otherwise then what it was;
And is it possible, quoth he, a woman,
Should make so neat and rare a thing that no man
That ever saw it, but would say, nay swear,
But that it was alive, it is so rare;
Let me but touch it, sure it is alive,
Husband, you shall not as I hope to thrive;
I pray forbear, one touch will quite deface it,
I would not for a crown you should disgrace it;
But if you see a fault, mend it I pray,
Look well upon it ere you go away.
Nay wife there is no fault thou dost excell,
Except there be a fault in doing well:
Husband I see your Judgement is not good,
If that the thing be rightlie understood.
Your weakness now no longer will I mother,
One of his stones is bigger then the other,
And must be par'd away, or I protest,
The sight of that will quite disgrace the rest:
Go borrow me a toole, for ours are all,
Either too blunt, too big, or else too small;
The man to borrow a toole vvent half a mile;
And she conveyed avvay the *F*ier the vvhile:
The *F*rier svvore by *Saint Hughs* bones,
He'd rather lose his Life then lose his stones:
To her he yeilded for to give the Ring,
That put him in most fear about this thing;
That vvomen are so honest, is this true?
Think vvhat you vvill, say nothing, so adue,

*F I N I S.*